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which surely deserve attention. For example, there are references to Van Hook, Brooks and to John D. Rockefeller which seem superfluous; but there is allusion to Schneider on the history of American philosophy and to Dornstein on the history of American economic thought. Other aspects of American historical and geographical topics were important in the history of American law, which are ignored. Consciously or unconsciously, Dr. Skotheim seems to assume that intellectual history, however it is interpreted, means the discussion or the use of doctrines which have succeeded pragmatically. This is a defensible position, although it suffers from the difficulty that it is also not difficult to define success, nor may it also turn into failure. Some of the omissions are regrettable. One might doubt the value of the references to democratic life. In connection with Perry Miller it might have been pointed out that he and his disciple, Father Walter Ong, S.J., had much more relevant things to say about the influence of Petrus Ruardus on the American mind. Miller argued that the New England Calvinist was never as orthodox as were Geneva or Scottish Calvinism and apart from the economic forces which Perry Miller stressed (even if as Dr. Skotheim suggests he did not stress enough), John Winthrop's ideal of a "City upon a Hill" had proved to be Utopian by the time of his death. It would soon be true to say that a man who has been born in Boston and who has been born in Boston and India would be to be born again. But the insistence of Perry Miller and of other strict intellectual historians that it is worthwhile to dis-

Angus and  
Robertson

jealousy; that he can be forgiven for a measure of exasperation. But to select one's past writings is not satisfactory to present the clearest aspect of one's views, nor the most useful. Narcissism should be combined with greater brevity.

Mr. Leclercq adopts a moderate standpoint than that of Prof. Fall, blaming the French and Americans more, and more rightly. We are reminded of General Leclercq, almost alone among French soldiers and politicians at the time, was unquestionably right about the policy France should have followed in 1946. Mr. Leclercq also collaborated with Philippe Leclercq in the most detailed account of the 1944 Geneva Conference that is yet appeared, *La Fin d'une guerre*; still believes that there, would have been no war if Leclercq's advice had been followed in 1946, and that the 1944 Geneva Settlement should have worked. He has no doubts about French responsibility for the first World War.

much recent history of the United States. Both Brooks and Charles Adams II are passed over, although there is an allusion to Brooks. More serious is the ignoring of the role of American historiography, which surely deserve attention. For example, there are references to Van Dusen Brooks and to John D. Rockefeller, which seem superfluous; but there is an allusion to Schneider on the history of American philosophy and to Dabbs on the history of American economic thought.

Other aspects of American historical and philosophical topics, one very important, the history of American law, are also ignored. Consciously or unconsciously, Dr. Skowheim seems to assume that intellectual history, however it is interpreted, means the discussion or the use of doctrines and has succeeded pragmatically. It is a defensible position, although it suffers from the difficulty that it is not only difficult to define but may also turn into failure. Some

It is the same in true of the treatment of the late Perry Miller. His intellectual admiration for Jonathan Edwards and his appreciation of the dire situation of modern mankind was not simply a conservative reaction against modern American democratic life. In connection with Perry Miller it might have been pointed out that he and his disciple, Walter Ong, S.J., had much more relevant things to say about the influence of Peter Ramus than is suggested here. Perry Miller argued that New England Calvinism was never as orthodox as were Geneva or Scottish Calvinism and apart from the economic forces which Perry Miller stressed (even if as Dr. Skotchdopole suggests he did not stress enough, John Winthrop's ideal of a "City upon a Hill" had proved to be a Utopian by the time of his death. It would soon be true to say that "a man who has been born in Boston feels" no need to be born again". But the insistence of Perry Miller and of other strict intellectual historians that it is worthwhile to dis-

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**RASH BLACKFETTER**







LUIS BOLIN: *Spain: The Vital Years*. 397pp. Cassell. £2 10s. DOLORES IBARRURI: *They Shall Not Pass*. 351pp. Lawrence and Wishart. £2 5s.

A soldier in the First World War, when asked by his commanding general where he started the war, is said to have replied: "I didn't start it, sir—I think the Kaiser did." Luis Bolin would have been in no such difficulty about the Spanish Civil War, because he did almost literally start it, by organizing the flight which brought General Franco from the Canary Islands to Morocco in July 1936. His opening chapters describing the ten dramatic days in which he made his personal contribution to history are by far the most interesting part of his long, rambling, argumentative account of the war. Before and after this great moment in his life, the rest of the record is chiefly autobiographical self-justification and nationalist propaganda. It is revealing, but hardly important.

It is revealing in the first place about himself. He is half-Spanish and half-British, and his prejudices are those of the upper classes of both countries, though the British component in them is distinctly dated. He is a devout Roman Catholic, a fanatical monarchist, a self-conscious officer-and-gentleman. He finds it perfectly respectable, to the point of needing no explanation or apology, to have acted as go-between in a gun-running operation (mounted on Claridge's, apparently) against the elected government of his country; or to have served as Franco's emissary to secure Mussolini's support in his perceptions, or rather the lack of them, is often enough to frustrate all comment. One example at a serious level is his blithe remark that "Franco had done his utmost to prevent civil war" before launching it. At a different level is his reference to "one of the finest wild-life refuges in the world... where I had shot duck three years before". Incongruity is one of his blind spots, of which there are many.

Clearly at this rate the Spanish Civil War is going to go on for a long time to come. To stoke it up on the other side, there comes simultaneously a very different but equally bigoted contribution, the autobiography of Dolores Ibarruri, known as "La Pasionaria" (the passion-flower). Her experience of life has been diametrically opposed at every point to that of Luis Bolin. Born in poverty, married to a miner, converted from devout Catholicism to fanatical Communism, equally convinced that justice lay wholly on her side, she played much the same role in Moscow that Luis Bolin played in Rome. Again it is impossible to take most of her propaganda seriously, but there are occasional episodes (notably when the Republicans were moving towards capitulation) on which she sheds new light. But in reading both books, the foreign reader is left with the puzzled feeling

that if half of what either of them says is true, it seems inconceivable that any decent person should have been on the other side at all. The comparison of myths is an exercise that can be applied with particular interesting effect to these two books. One celebrated myth they are not far apart: at least they do not directly contradict each other. This is the story that while Colonel Mordacq was defending the Alcázar for Franco, a Republican officer told him on the telephone that if he did not surrender his son would be shot; he did not surrender, and his son was duly shot, though not until a month later. The story has been persistently asserted and denied. Luis Bolin, of course, is convinced that it is true, and produces evidence from former sceptics who now admit to having been convinced. La Pasionaria admits the story as a possibility, but claims that in any case, even if it were true, the Communists were revolutionaries, not criminals. The truth will presumably remain eternally different for each side. On other episodes, however, the two authors would certainly not agree to differ. One is the murder of Calvo Sotelo, the leader of the right-wing opposition, which sparked off the rising in 1936. A few weeks before his murder, he had made his last speech in the Cortes. Spanish nationalists have al-

ways believed that the murder was instigated by left-wing opponents in retaliation for his flaming denunciation of the Republican government. La Pasionaria quotes extensively from her own speech on the same occasion to

ruin it into the noses of the Francoist writers who for 24 years have been spreading the infamous lie that I instigated in parliament the assassination of Calvo Sotelo.

Luis Bolin, who is certainly one of those who refers to, does not quote her speech at all. But he does report that as Calvo Sotelo finished his own speech, La Pasionaria was on her feet, shouting: "You have uttered your last words here!" What becomes of the myth of a left-wing conspiracy? The two writers leave us no nearer to the truth than before.

A similar ambiguous conclusion emerges about the myth of Guernica. From La Pasionaria we have the orthodox left-wing account of "the terrible destruction of Guernica on April 26, 1937, by rebel planes". Luis Bolin maintains, with a good deal of circumstantial evidence, that Guernica although a legitimate target for bombing was hardly damaged at all by air raids.

But the Republicans in Bilbao needed a sensational story to offset their reverses. They dispatched Asturian miners to dynamite Guernica and set fire to its buildings and swore that they had been blown to smithereens by German bombs.

Which is the true myth? It should be said that the left-wing myth convinced Professor Hugh Thomas, the best-known British historian of the war. The right-wing myth convinced the late Douglas Jerrold, whose study of the evidence appears the more searching of the two. But no reader who already has his convictions formed will find them modified by either of these two books.

The fact is, in other words, that neither author has the least pretension to being an objective historian.

One wonders whether the Civil War, since it is a large subject, is any longer possible for the editors of history, like the editors of fiction, to become stronger than the facts. Whatever the answer, the editors of *Oxford English*, the *Memphis Courier*, that Picasso painted a *Guernica* and the *New York Times* which bears its name, are the total volume of his occupation fact is that the output, too, might never have to believe diametrically stated but for an increasingly urgent things about it, regarding the public responsibility and of the evidence. The commitment he displayed after winning the Nobel Prize for Literature proved capacity of the year 1950. The articles and public both sides to believe addresses collected here all date from to believe makes it a final decade.

There are a number of writers who have worked on and off as examples in both books. It has been able to undermine a reticence between General Franco and the editors of *Life* and *Time*, and the leadership of the Spanish Civil War as much as the sightment, and episodes which sought the hush of the background of the highly existence in Mississippi while man and Russian interests, was winning its high, aesthetic perhaps one point only to contain in a county of the mind (whose combined testimony of the tale creator, explorer, historian, war) being only hypothetical, called Yoknapatawpha. "I will proclaim more than a prophet to the last," he wrote to Malcolm Bolin, "that if the military leadership, rebelled against the Republic, it is my ambition when they did, to be, as a private individual, the best-known British historian of the war. The right-wing myth convinced the late Douglas Jerrold, whose study of the evidence appears the more searching of the two. But no reader who already has his convictions formed will find them modified by either of these two books.

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ELIAM FAULKNER: *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters*. Edited by James B. Meriwether. 233pp. Chatto and Windus. 25s. MALCOLM COWLEY: *The Faulkner-Cowley File*. Letters and Memoirs, 1944-1962. 184pp. Chatto and Windus. 30s.

## HE MADE THE BOOKS AND HE DIED

creation of "a people decadent and even obsolete through inbreeding and illiteracy... a kind of species of juvenile delinquents with a folklore of blood and violence" he rejected as "baseless and illusory" as that one generation ago of... "coloured puttees and magnolia". But if ever there was, he equally rejected "the forces outside the South which would force legal or police compulsion to eradicate that evil overnight". If he was against "compulsory segregation", he was also against "compulsory integration". The South he believed, drawing his moral from the Civil War, would go to any length before accepting "alteration of its racial condition by mere force of law or economic threat".

All this was anathema to the northern liberal. To Southerners his preaching complete racial equality before the constitution, morality and God, must have been equally anathema. "To live anywhere in the world today," he argued, "and be against equality because of race or colour, is like living in Alaska and being against snow." And "why," he asked mockingly, "do we have so low an opinion of our blood and traditions as to fear that, as soon as the Negro enters our house by the front door, he will propose marriage to our daughter and she will immediately accept him?"

To Negroes, speaking as one of themselves, he recommended "cleanliness and decency and courtesy and dignity", a quiet perseverance, the use of patience as an active weapon, above all, an "inflexible unyielding flexibility which in the end will make the white man himself sick and tired of fighting it". In fact, he recommended precisely that brand of "Uncle Tomian" which was already being rejected by many of the younger Negroes. To hear of the responsibilities of equality from a Southerner of "self-restraint, honesty, dependability, purity"—might well seem laughable to readers of  *Ebony*.

To be told to act not even as well as just any white man, but to act as well as the best of white men "might rightly seem a programme for saints. Certainly it was preposterous for a Negro to be told that "he must learn to cease forever more thinking

himself is unexplained—perhaps such subtleties are too much of our own time). More important than this, though, is that Gust's malady, the malady of his age, the scourge of our own, his failing contact with the real, his loss of proportion, is matched and made convincing by the subjective form of utterance and a subtle use of colloquial language which reveals the dramatic hand. *Spiel im Morgengrauen* makes intermittent use of the same technique to project the same world, but one has a sense of the *deu* in 1927 it was already dead.

An interesting inclusion in the volume is *Der Sekundant*, a posthumous story which is notable for its unusual view of the duel. After all his many exposures of its foolishness—*Leutnant Gust* cost him his commission in the medical reserve—Schnitzler in this late tale, without defending the duel as such, makes the point that an instant readiness to stake one's life for honour, a wife's virtue, a sister's good name and suchlike trifles lent a certain tone and style to society which have since been lost—a thought which in itself should make us hesitate to parrot decadence at Schnitzler's world. As an aesthetic judgment, given his consistent quality as its chronicler, the charge was always meaningless.

S. Fischer Verlag of Frankfurt has published a 544-page volume of Henri Michaux's works, with the French original and a German translation (by Paul Celan and Kurt Lehnardt) on facing pages. The selection (from *Qui je suis, Erreur, Un barbare en Asie, La Nuit noire, Plume, L'Esprit du dedans, Allure et Passages*) is by the author himself, aided by Christoph Scherwin. The presentation is excellent. The price, boxed, is 40 DM.

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## NUMBERS AND VERSES

THE CONNECTION between mathematics and poetry may not be obvious to our modern world, in which many people would probably regard them as extreme representatives of each of Lord Snow's two cultures. The romantic idea of the poet as a prophet rather than a conscious, rational and deliberate craftsman is still with us. We are not easily fooled when eminent mathematicians declare that higher mathematics is an art rather than a science, and that what they pursue is beauty rather than truth. The day is past when philosophical theories could be presented in verse form, and we do not, as Milton and Dryden did, use "numbers" as a synonym of "verses".

But though we must reject the idea that in some "deep" sense mathematics "is" poetry and the other way round, perhaps we can establish another kind of connexion between the two. Mathematics is often said to be the language of science. Some would even maintain that only those branches of inquiry are worthy of being called scientific whose fundamental concepts are capable of being handled mathematically. As science and scientific are positively loaded words in our society, mathematical methods spread everywhere—not only in astronomy, physics and chemistry, but also in biology, psychology and sociology, not to speak of philosophy, essential parts of which are nowadays indistinguishable from mathematics. We should therefore not be surprised to find mathematics being used to describe and analyse poetry.

A recent publication from Munich, *Mathematik und Dichtung*, allows us to see what has so far been achieved in this respect. It is probably no coincidence that out of the twenty-one contributors to the volume only four are literary scholars by profession, while the sister field of language and linguistics contributes seven names. Of the rest, four are mainly mathematicians, while the remaining six have received professional training in philosophy, psychology and sociology. The traditional departments of literature in the universities of the world have not yet become obsessed by the mathematical devil; it is perhaps also symptomatic that the editors of the book—one a literary man, the other a mathematician—are both professors of an institute of technology, the Technische Hochschule at Stuttgart.

It can be said at once that the present volume does not by any means establish a complete mathematical theory of poetry. The chief editor himself expressly denies any such claims: mathematical methods may be used, he says, to supplement traditional, interpretative literary research methods, not to supplant them. Sometimes the reader may legitimately wonder whether even the supplementing is really worth while. A flavour of the fantastic "mathematical" exegesis of the Apocalypse (a genre which even Newton tried his hand at) certainly appears in some of the contributions. Here, for instance, counting syllables and words, or distances between recurrent sounds, or sequences of symbols, does not appear very fruitful, unless the results of these operations can be firmly fitted into a more general theory. But in all too many cases the writers seem to become fascinated by the mere fact that it is at all possible to describe features of style numerically and thus to reduce different texts to a common denominator. Really that ought not to be so surprising. After all, any form can be described mathematically. The difficulty is to correlate, in a strict manner, the formal description with the semantic aspect of language, including its aesthetic effects.

The first to make a determined effort to lay the foundations of a mathematical aesthetic theory with at least a minimum of empirical testability was the American mathematician G. Birkhoff. Among other things, he tried to express the "aesthetic value" of an object by means of a simple formula into which two basic variables enter: *order* and *complexity*. The observer, or listener, or reader, says Birkhoff, is likely to prefer those objects where the amount of order is high and the amount of complexity low.

In order to obtain values for the basic variables, order and complexity have to be expressed in measurable terms. In the case of poetry Birkhoff measured the complexity simply in terms of the length of the poem, and in terms of such things as rhyme, full vowels, assonances and alliteration, making deductions for excess values.

It is not difficult to criticize such a crude measure as this. In the first place, it leaves the semantic import of the poem altogether out of account: a nonsense rhyme easily attains higher values than Goethe's "Ueber allen Gipfeln". Secondly, it considers only a few of the formal properties: neither rhythm, nor stress nor syntax is taken into account. Thirdly, people's appreciation of rhyme and, in fact, of any other property, differs from period to period, from genre to genre. It may even change in the individual as he reads. The work of art itself changes our way of reacting to it.

Yet, however deficient Birkhoff's formula may be as an actual instrument for measuring aesthetic effects, it has the advantage of being empirically testable, and also adjustable in the light of empirical findings. That is also well brought out in Rul Gunzenhäuser's discussion, in which he suggests that one improvement of Birkhoff's idea would be to express "complexity" and "order" in terms of "amount of information" and "amount of subjective redundancy". But this wedding of Shannon's information theory to Birkhoff's mathematical aesthetics does not remove the fundamental problem, which will now be to choose relevant measures of information and redundancy. We need both theoretical clarification and plenty of empirical testing before we can say that we have even the beginnings of a mathematical aesthetic theory, let alone a mathematical theory of literature. The contribution of another member of the Stuttgart team, Max Bense, is rather disappointing in this respect: we get the vague and wordy generalities instead of concrete applications and clarified concepts. The reader who goes on to Dr. Bense's recently published *Aesthetik*, where the same article is reprinted as a chapter, will be equally disappointed.

The lack of a firm theoretical framework makes itself felt throughout *Mathematik und Dichtung*. Too many contributors just hit upon some formal feature or features of a poem—be it sounds, syllables, words, word-classes or immediate constituents—and then start counting their frequencies, recurrences or combinations. In this way they certainly succeed in establishing some sort of objective measure of "style". But unfortunately each measure implies a different measure of style, and the relation of the measures to each other and to the vague common-sense idea of style remains obscure.

There is no question about the usefulness of objective, numerical measures for solving problems of disputed authorship and the like. That problem, however, is outside the scope of the "German" volume. Instead, it is given much attention in a recently published book from America, *The Computer and Literary Style*, edited by Jacob Leed. For the purposes of identification our aim must be to find a characteristic, or set of characteristics, that is maximally variable between authors and maximally constant within the same author. It is not at all necessary for these characteristics to be aesthetically relevant. Fingerprints are excellent identifiers, but tell us next to nothing about the man. No doubt the efforts to find good identifiers will also increase our knowledge of the structure of the literary work of art in general. Louis Mille's article on Swift's style is promising in this respect. But it is only when the objective findings have been fitted into a general theory, or been strictly connected with psychological data, that we can begin to take them seriously as

contributions to our understanding of poetry.

What is unsatisfactory about too many articles in the German volume is that the writers do not clearly indicate for what purpose their own particular measure of poetical style can be used, and that they tend all too hastily to assume that it enters as a significant factor to influence our aesthetic appreciation of poetry. Norbert Ulrich establishes, for instance, that ordinary *a* and *ma* *a* are distributed in symmetrical fashion in Baudelaire's sonnets, but the relevance of this fact for our appreciation of those sonnets is doubtful, to say the least.

The number of facts that can be stated about a poem, even about the form of a poem, is strictly infinite: the job of the researcher is to find out which of those facts are relevant to the problem he is trying to solve. A theory may help to indicate them; in the absence of a theory the researcher has to find out by trial and error what facts are relevant. A mathematical formulation of the experimental set-up is certainly an advantage, but it is no substitute for the theory, nor for the empirical tests.

The best contributions in *The Computer and Literary Style* are those which contain neither counts nor measurements, neither calculations nor graphs. They are all concerned with the problem of defining poetry in a way that shows up, above all, the difference between political language and ordinary language. Roman Jacobson, writing with his usual verve, and in magisterial possession of a vast fund of learned illustration, insists that the essence of poetry is to be found in the grammatical structure of its language, rather than in the metaphors so intensely studied in the 1930s and after. Similar ideas are elaborated by three other writers, Samuel R. Levin of the City University of New York, Manfred Bierwisch of the German Academy of Sciences in East Berlin and Klaus Baumgärtner at the Free University of West Berlin. All of them attempt to describe poetical language by means of the apparatus provided by Noam Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar.

One of the differences between poetry and prose is, says Levin, that the language of poetry is more "surprising". It has been suggested that this element of surprise might be expressed statistically, in terms of the transition probabilities in word or word-class sequences. Levin maintains, however (like Chomsky), that the element of surprise is caused not by deviations from the statistical norm, but by an abnormal grammatical structure, and quotes lines such as Ezra Pound's "Shines in the mind of heaven God" and Dylan Thomas's "There could I marvel my birthday away". Statistically, the transition probability for the sequence "heaven God" is perhaps not particularly low. What is remarkable about the sentence is its inversion of the normal English word-order, just as Dylan Thomas's sentence is remarkable by its construction of "marvel" as a transitive verb. These deviations affect the grammatical structure of the language at different "levels" (in Chomsky's sense).

The "poeticness" of a text naturally does not depend only, or even chiefly, on grammatical deviations. Even perfectly normal syntactical constructions can have marked poetical effects. Klaus Baumgärtner therefore holds that we have not explored the contribution of grammar to poetry until we have a complete formal description of its language. He lays weight on the complexity of the structure measured in terms of the number of transformations, including deviating ones, that are necessary to produce the text in question. Following Roman Jakobson, he also attaches great importance to the poetical value of structural parallelism, which can also be strictly explicated in terms of transformational grammar.

By far the weightiest and best contribution in *Mathematik und Dichtung* is the fittingly titled article "Poetics and Linguistics" by Manfred Bierwisch. It is acute and to the point, but also broadly conceived and rich in suggestions for further research. Readers unfamiliar with the way of writing of the transformational school of linguists must perhaps be warned not to lose patience with the abrupt and seemingly dogmatic way in which the ideas are

sometimes presented—that the consequence of adopting a methodological apparatus. The linguistic qualifications are also a due course.

The chief object of a theory of poetry, in Dr. Bierwisch's view, is to construct a grammar capable not only of describing, but of explaining, actual texts, but also of deciding, of two structures is the more poetic. Stated as baldly as this, the appears fantastic, not to say ludicrous: how could grammar be more poetic than "out, out, brief candle" or "out, out, short light"?

There is not just one poetical grammar, but several, even for different grammars for different periods, but even the individual may change his rules as he reads. Shakespeare's blank verse, for instance, is a deviation from the grammatical "regular"—and its no their turn can be, and are, broken poetical effects. The grammar of poetry may therefore consist of several layers, ordered as a hierarchy, at the bottom of which is the grammar of ordinary language.

By adopting the (potentially) tremendously powerful formalism of Noam Chomsky's generative transformational grammar, the idea of this structure can be made clearly and consistently, and it is a much-needed tool for further search into such things as the difference between poetry and music and other fine arts. Further, a semantic theory now being developed for transformational grammar may also get a clearer view of the relation between poetry and history, or the history of a Dr. Bierwisch is rather sceptical about the use of linguistic methods to explain poetical effects: "the methods make sense, he says, when a firm theoretical basis is laid. His own contribution sheds shadows what such a theory look like. But we have a long way to go before we have it.

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MACBIRD  
The anticipated fow about Rolf Hochhuth's projected play *The Soldiers* will be the sort of fuss that inevitably surrounds the deconstruction of lovely monuments.

Opponents of the play are likely to challenge not the truth of its assumptions about Churchill but the tastelessness of parading these assumptions on a public stage. There are, of course, books galore about our compassionate bombing of Germany (the play is said to have been inspired by the bombing of Dresden), but there's a world of difference between Churchill vilified in print and Churchill suddenly open to reproving impersonation by any actor who happens to shove two pillows underneath a siren suit and chew on a cigar. Thou shalt not construct effigies unless you seriously want them burned or worshipped, and Churchill is already worshipped to a non-flammable degree. He has been our national totem for so long, the leading player in our best-loved documentary drama, that the chances of presenting him on stage in an even faintly more vulnerable role than the one posterity has granted him look fairly thin.

All the same, if the theatre is to deal at all effectively in public matters, the last thing it can afford is piety—however tactical. The problem is not so much to get the theatre into the marketplace as to get the public out of it. There is always the chance that if people no longer flock to the theatre to collect their myths, they may well sink there to have them humanized afresh. In the case of Churchill and *pure* his mystique of fortitude—this may be more than Britain can take. But we shall see. That is to say, we hope that we shall see.

While we are nerving ourselves to cope with Hochhuth, America is already striking attitudes to *MacBird*, a short pastiche of *Macbeth* composed by a Berkeley new leftist, Barbara Garson. It opened this week in Greenwich Village. (The full text appears in the current *City Lights Journal*, or can be got for one dollar from—where else?—the Grassy Knoll Press, P.O. Box 2273, Grand Central Station, New York.) The cast-list reveals Miss Garson's general aim: *MacBird* is identifiably President Johnson, Duncan is identifiably John Kennedy, minor characters include Robert Kennedy as MacDuff or Ken-O'Dunc. There is also the Earl of Warren, Lord MacNamara, and Lord Stevenson, the Egg of Head. *MacBird* is presented not just as the murderer of Duncan, but also as obscenely responsible for Teddy Kennedy's plane crash and Adlai Stevenson's stroke: a gun-toting Texas hoodlum, mad with power, he is finally brought low by Robert Kennedy. The witches a Negro, a beatnik and an old leftist—had predicted that no human adversary would defeat him, but Robert it turns out—superhuman; instead of a heart, he has "precision apparatus of steel and plastic tubing", inserted at birth by an ambitious father. This is appropriately assertive and grotesque, but it is significant that the play's central act—the murder of John Ken-O'Dunc—is the vaguest thing in it. There are hints and innuendoes. *MacBird* is shown to anticipate Ken-O'Dunc's downfall, to profit from it, and to take pains to stifle speculation about who was responsible for it. Lady *MacBird* has her damned spot and no amount of Affwick can get rid of the nasty smell she smells; the murder itself is shown as a conspiracy in which the Texas

police, at any rate, were deeply implicated. But Miss Garson can never quite bring herself to make the accusation she so painstakingly hints towards, and this tends to give the whole play an insufferably coy outrageousness; she has no scruples about presenting *MacBird* as a lunatic murderer, but plenty about saying who he's murdered.

Aside from this central fuzziness, and taken simply as burlesque of Shakespeare, *MacBird* is poor stuff. Done in very crudely imitated Elizabethan blank verse and full of Pox Americana kind of wisecracks, it rarely gets beyond the level of passable end-of-term pranking. The bits it borrows from other Shakespeare plays are notably, the most familiar bits of all: thus we have the Earl of Warren lamenting: "O whine and pout, that ever I was born to bury doubt", and Egg of Head soliloquizing on his liberal indecisiveness as follows:

To see or not to see: that is the question. Whether 'tis wiser as a statesman to ignore the gross deception of outrageous liars, Or to speak out against a reign of evil And by so doing, end there for all time The chance and hope to work within for change.

The prevailing tone alternates between giggling cynicism and whipped-rat lament with breaks here and there for glibbed, inert rhetoric or basic belly laughter. What is remarkable about *MacBird* is the reception it has received from eminent American pundits. What kind of intellectual climate is it in which a trifling pantomime of this kind can get described by Robert Brustein as "one of the brutally provocative works in the American theater, as well as one of the most grimly amusing"? By Eric Bentley as a warning against the American way of life, by Dwight Macdonald as "the funniest, toughest-satire and most ingenious political satire I've read in years"? Robert Lowell, America's finest poet and most ubiquitous blurb-writer, has also commented: "I have nothing to say about the political truth of this play, but I am sure a kind of genius has gone into the writing". And here, it seems, is the crux of the matter: tickled by the scandalousness of what the play seems to be saying, wishing to take up a radical position on it and yet avoid total assent, the more self-consciously fiery critics have taken utterly unconvincing refuge in praise of the play's "literary merit": they are counsels for the defence where, if the play really is saying anything true or important, they ought surely to be prosecuting like mad.

At Lionel Abel points out in an intelligent piece in the current *Partisan Review*, Dwight Macdonald gives the most staggering performance of the lot, with his piece in the *New York Review of Books* (December 1). More equivocal than Miss Garson herself, he announces that if *MacBird* is really saying that Johnson murdered Kennedy, it "would not be worth reading, let alone reviewing". Miss Garson, he goes on, is so funny a writer that she could not possibly believe such a crazy thing. No, the truth is that "having picked *Macbeth* as the Shakespearean play that best lent itself to topical satire, she was stuck with the plot line . . . and *Macbeth*'s murder of Duncan could not have been omitted without its becoming another play". And that, in case we are still wondering, is why Miss Garson is so vague about attaching the blame. The objections to this are, of course, dizzyingly numerous. The question remains, though, why is Mr. Macdonald so anxious to pull the wool over his own eyes? The shock of non-conformism, perhaps, the eagerness to seize the radical moment without getting hurt, the hurried assembling of a literary-critical mask to disguise the broad, delinquent grin beneath. There are all possible excuses—since Mr. Macdonald makes out no case at all for the play's supposed humour and ingenuity—but they are hardly sufficient to account for either his or Miss Garson's determination to neutralize the rebelliousness they are so anxious to be praised for. The one person who will

not be worried by *MacBird* is President Johnson; after all, he knows he is innocent of the crime he has not been accused of; while the intellectuals double-think themselves into a coma, he can get on with shifting Birnam Wood to Dunsinane.

## Letters to the Editor

## THE PASTOR FOUNDATION

Sir, Communication is a difficult and bewildering business. In two very brief letters (January 5 and 19) I questioned Professor Hugh Lloyd-Jones's assessment of the "barbarism" which threatens us and his correspondingly hyperbolic claims for the efficacy of classical scholarship as "a continuing commando action on behalf of civilized values". In view of the Spanish government's well-publicized interference in university affairs (which the other correspondents have now also condemned), I asked what the Pastor Foundation and the senior classical professors had done to defend Professor Garcia Calvo when he was dismissed from the University of Madrid last year.

Professor Lloyd-Jones replies that I am bullying him because my "academic and political point of view" requires me to deny him the right to praise Spanish classical scholarship and that Professor Adrados adds that I will allow this right to no one. Professor Adrados also protests that I seek to put a guilt label on him and suggest he should leave his Madrid post which he is elected by Professor Galland. Professor Berard writes all the way from Alberta against my hysterical efforts to turn repeatedly honourable men into villains and even, it seems, to call for armed uprising.

I am unable to discover where all these remarkable demands lurk hidden in my eight-plus column-inches. It seems not to have occurred to any of the correspondents that the most common purpose of an interrogative sentence is to seek information; the writer does not himself possess. Before I wrote my first letter I searched the rather extensive reports in the national press on the unhappy situation at the University of Madrid and found no answer. Professor Adrados's letter implies that I would not have found it in the Spanish press either. At least, therefore, my hysterical bullying has elicited information not previously available in this country, except perhaps to a small number of men of whom I was not one. Classical scholars will not be alone in responding with appreciation and respect to the facts given by Professors Adrados and Galland.

M. I. FINLEY,  
Jeux College, Cambridge.

MALCOLM LOWRY  
Sir—While there is a rediscovery of Malcolm Lowry going on in the country it might be pertinent to point out that nearly ten years ago his *Under the Volcano* was required reading for a course on modern literature at the American Literature at the University of Brussels. Copies of the Vintage paperback edition had to be obtained from the States as nothing of his was in print here.

NICHOLAS PEMBERTON,  
Bowes & Bowes, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge.

## STATE AID FOR THE ARTS

Sir—I wonder whether the Arts Council's patronage would not be more properly spent, and to greater effect, by subsidizing the publication of literature that happens to be hopelessly uncommercial, too difficult, too untasteful, too special or with an inviolable promise to lead to a publisher's selection of suitable candidates by the Arts Council Literature Panel, I dare say, presents no very difficult problem. The chosen manuscripts, carrying an option on the author's next work, should be sent out by the Council for tender to mixed groups of large and small publishers asking them to quote what they would charge to publish the manuscripts in the normal manner among the rest of their list. The publishers should be chosen, each time, with some regard to the affinities of the character of their lists and of the work itself.

If the work had any merit, and some of the publishers might tend to take it on trust since the manuscript, so to speak, would carry the imprimatur of the Arts Council Literature Panel, publication probably could be obtained at a subsidized cost as little as half of a third of its manufacturing cost as a book. The publisher would calculate on recovering the remainder of the (reduced) under these special circumstances contribution to his overhead by the sale of the book itself, and, apart from virtue being its own reward, a publisher would be well satisfied if this flutter on the author's future, secured by his option, came off and his enterprise eventually added another worthwhile author to his list.

Whether these ideas might be improved or not, they are an indication of the Arts Council Literature Panel's

role in their publication is a matter of conjecture; if the former, then the books could appear under the joint imprimatur of the Arts Council and the publisher concerned in each title. Even a modest portion of their literary budget could be made to stretch wonderfully in this way, and I suspect that the greatest service one can render an author is to help his work see the light of day.

ANTHONY CUDWILL,  
Home Cottage, Bignor, Sussex.

## BLACK AND WHITE

Sir, So your reviewer (January 26) of my book *Racial Integration* (British Publishing Company) thinks that it should be hung, drawn and quartered under the terms of the Race Relations Act for publishing it?

Presumably he must also think that the editors of *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Listener* and many other national and provincial papers who have equally unflinchingly published the material should stand with me on the scaffold.

And also to be persecuted for the same offence would be many of the world's leading scientists who unequivocally affirm that the human races are differentially genetically and that such inherent differences, ineluctable by any cultural means, can be evaluated in a social and national context, which is all I contend and which, contrary to your reviewer, I think should be public knowledge.

In the hope that it might help your reviewer to face his mind from medieval obscurantism and bigotry may I respectfully suggest that he could study with advantage the implications of the latest authoritative views on racial matters: the report of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Racial Symposia) for one session just ended (December 30).

H. H. ISHERWOOD,  
18 Oaks Drive, Racecourse Heath, Ringwood, Hants.

"Our reviewer writes: 'The title of Mr. Isherwood's book *Racial Integration* is perhaps intentionally misleading. What he in fact contends is that the white race is inherently and innately superior to the coloured races of mankind and must therefore be kept separate from them for fear of contamination. The implications of such a belief in terms of policy can be imagined and it is this which raises the question of the Race Relations Act. Such a belief can only lead to rigid apartheid and discriminatory race laws of every kind. The readiness with which Mr. Isherwood's mind turns to lusting, drawing and quarantining when his beliefs are challenged is in itself interesting."

FINE KNACKS  
Sir—If Mr. Carter (February 2) had himself queried the price he charged for this indifferent book, why did he make a personal attack on me for raising the same question after publication?

I do not despise shopkeepers, but I do despise any man whose idea of answering my considered criticisms is to tell me to kick myself. It is not unreasonable to suppose that a high portion of a small edition would be ordered by people spending other people's money, i.e., librarians. I am a ratepayer.

There is now a suggestion that if mere men in the street, such as I, are to be allowed to criticize books and challenge prices, what is the civilized world coming to? It is high time that we did, and not only from the street, but from the house. My log-rolling was done in *World War II*. We are real now.

There is still no answer to my criticisms, but they are obviously hitting where it hurts. So all is yet but blood and bludgeons.

JOHN R. HETHERINGTON,  
26 Vernon Road, Birmingham, 16.

THE PORNBROKERS

Sir—Your reviewer of Steven Marcus's *The Other Victorians* (January 19) mentions the usual sexual meaning of "to spend". And the notions underlying it. It may be interesting to note that the Victorian era was, in this respect, the heir of other, more robust ages. Eric Partridge lists the specific meaning of the verb, which is, by the way, not recorded in the *O.E.D.* in his glossary *Shakespeare's Language*. It is "to spend in a dissolute way, and with reference to both sexes in a somewhat indecent Restoration play, *Sodom, or the Quintessence of Debauchery* (1684), usually ascribed to Rochester."

DITRICH ROLLÉ,  
44 Münster Westfalen, Wittenstein.

LAUGHTER ON THE LEFT

Sir—An interesting point raised neither by Mr. Michael Barclay in his *Left-Handed Book* nor by your reviewer (December 29) is the sinister (or sinister) make-up of English daily papers; notably, the new front page of *The Times*. This seems usual, but not inevitable, in the French press, so that it would not appear to be the same origin as the rule of the road. Does the human eye in fact move first to the top left-hand corner, at least when reading languages written from left to right?

FRANK JELLINEK,  
74 Habere-Poche, France (Haute-Savoie).

(Other letters are on page 112)



## Letters of Wallace Stevens edited by Holly Stevens

A collection of eight hundred letters written between 1895 and 1955, the year of Stevens's death, with some early letters from his father, and long extracts from his *Journal*. The material, edited by his daughter, makes a full and revealing portrait of this great American poet. Illustrated with 20 pages of plates. 7 guineas.

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"The peculiar value of this important book lies in its demonstration of the continuing incompetence of politicians confronted by modern methods of publicity... A very full account of the parties' propaganda activities, based mainly on the 1964 experience."—JUGO YOUNG, *THE SUNDAY TIMES*. With four pages of plates. 42/-.

## Faber &amp; Faber



## FROM IMAGIST EXCURSIONS TO THE AGE OF OVERKILL

YVON WINTERS: *Early Poems 1920-1928*. 148pp. Denver: Alan Swallow. \$3.75. RICHMOND LATTIMORE: *The Stride of Time*. 83pp. University of Michigan Press, London: George Allen & Unwin. \$4.00. THOMAS HOLMES: *An Upland Pasture*. 69pp. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press. \$4.00. FREDERICK WILK: *Planets*. 71pp. New Hampshire: Quill Press. \$3.00. LOUIS COXE: *Nikolai and Decoration Day*. 89pp. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press. \$4.00. JAMES WHITEHEAD: *Domains*. 55pp. St. Louis: Louisiana State University Press. \$3.50.

Yvon Winters does not offer his early verse as a significant adjunct to the Muse's diadem. True, he regards it as "very good of its kind, quite as good as any of the 'experimental' work of this century", but we know from his *Primitivism and Decadence* that he holds a pretty low opinion of the entire experimental movement. When the *Collected Poems* appeared in 1963, there seemed to be a fair amount of early work, but it now emerges that Mr. Winters included only twenty-one of the 132 early poems now on show. So we are not admonished to find masterpieces here. We are to read the early poems, presumably, because we are interested in the poet who went from these to other things. The verses are preliminary notes, then, essays in a prosody which Mr. Winters was soon to discard. As paragraphs in the history of modern American verse, they call for some attention, but very few of them hold their account beyond that limited setting. Indeed, one's reaction to the first poems is that there must have been remarkably durable stuff in the poet who survived them and went on to write "John Sutter", "To the Holy Spirit", and "Sir Gawain". The poems in *The Immobility Wind* (1921) and *The Magpie's Shadow* (1922) exhibit the usual broken phrases, breathless syntax, the usual air of speaking as if they were afraid of being heard. In *The Bare Hills* (1927) one begins to hear, in single authoritative lines, the voice of the intransigent poet who was to write *Before Disaster* (1934). And then in "Quod Tergit Omnia", halfway through the present book, the poet of certitude has arrived; the manner "laurel, archaic, rude", the syntax magisterial. The mind is now "certain of its choice of passion but uncertain of the passionate end". But this is to the past. Most of the early poems are five-finger exer-

## SOME OF THE BEST

German Writing Today. Edited by Christopher Middleton. 238pp. Penguin. 6s.

Christopher Middleton defines his aim as being "to present a range of work by some of the best German-language writers of the past fifteen years" (the blurb deletes the "some of" from this claim); but it soon becomes apparent that the emphasis is on "experimental texts", and the editor pulls a very fast one indeed when he writes "I doubt if [this selection] is incomplete because it does not include work by several 'safe' writers". If we had been told which writers the editor considers "safe", this might have been unexceptionable; as it is, one can only suppose that he is referring to non-experimental writers who supposedly lack the "radical spirit" (whatever that means: the modernist fallacy seems to be lurking here). The crux of the matter is that the editor's aim and criteria are not at all clear. Though he may have fulfilled his real aim, he has not fulfilled his apparent aim, for too many writers who established themselves before, say, 1960

are omitted, and the flavour of the selection is unambiguously that of the early 1960s.

The translations, many of which are by Christopher Middleton himself, are excellent, the standard throughout being very high indeed. A number of them have already appeared elsewhere, but while we are told that it "would not have been sensible to offer samples of work which people can read in available translations", we are then presented with poems by Bobrowski, Enzensberger and Grass, all of whose work has recently appeared in English.

The selection has only a few odd inclusions. What on earth is Hilke Domin doing here? Why are Höller and Weyrauch included? Is Höller's inclusion a tribute to his non-creative activities? Is Weyrauch's poem on Ezra Pound included for its subject-matter? If so, would not Wieland Schmied's "Ode für Ezra Pound" have been a better choice? And to list translations of

work by Gisela Elsner (*The Giant Dwarf*) and Rolf Hochhuth (*The Representative*) but not by Elias Canetti (*Auto-da-fé*) is surely to be misled by the merely topical.

However, the real trouble with this selection is the omissions. The exclusion of Wilhelm Lehmann is understandable; though the fact remains that he is one of the best and most influential poets of this period (that his first collection came out in 1935 is irrelevant: Günter Eich's first appeared in 1930 for that matter). Why are we given nothing from Yvon Goll's 1951 and 1954 volumes, especially when the much less original Krowlow and Piontek are included? Other poets excluded: Jesse Thoor, F. B. Steiner, Marie Luise Kaschnitz, Christina Lavant, Peter Rühmkorf. Outstanding prose-writers of the period: excluded: Ilse Aichinger, Wolfgang Borchert, Elias Canetti, Wolfgang Hildesheimer, Friedo Lampe. Are these all by implication dismissed as "safe" writers? Or again, why are the east German writers Peter Hacks and Christa Wolf (*Der geteilte Himmel*, 1963) omitted? Were they, too, weighed in the balance and found wanting in radical spirit?

One of the really significant things about this selection is that it presents so many experimental writers to the English-speaking reader. The poetry of Max Höller, Rainer M. Gerhardt, Eugen Gomringer, Ernst Jandl, and Franz Mon, for instance, is little known in this country. But could we not have been told why Max Bense, Jürgen Becker and Carlfried Claus for instance are excluded? If the literary right wing is out, would it not have been better to give us a fuller introduction to and selection from the "avant-garde"? The book is splendidly produced, though, and errors are few and far between.

This is an important anthology as a one which contains much to enjoy. If it had been presented as an unashamedly personal selection of certain types of "New Writing in German"—a more accurate title—it would have been altogether admirable.

There are clues here to Mr. Winters's development, but nothing as significant as a certain remarkable short story which is the key to his whole work, in poetry and criticism. The story is printed in an anthology of psychological fiction called *Anchor in the Sea*, edited and published by Alan Swallow. The relation between the story and the early poems can now be examined.

*The Stride of Time* is a gathering of Richmond Lattimore's recent poems with some further translations (Arnaut Daniel, Leconte de Lisle, du Bellay, Gérard de Nerval, Cavafy, Euripides and Virgil) for which he is celebrated. The book is charming, autumnal in tone, the work of a man with a long classical memory. He speaks of "the squeeze of death" and, meanwhile, "the shine of wit", but these are, for the most part, quiet poems. Mr. Lattimore is a poet of percept, a description endorsed in a poem called "Verse" in which Dionysian or bardic aspirations are quietly set aside. Poetry in this urban case arises from some oyster's irritant which will not tolerate tranquility until "the percept is caught, sealed, fused, transposed as artifact".

Theodore Holmes's new book is a more daring affair. He seems to have committed himself, in this third collection, to a long straggling line which traces the contour of a loosely analogical mind. We are to follow where the voice leads, over aesthetic hill and dale. Scenes and landscapes are translated into speculation, mostly aesthetic and metaphysical. It is like Wallace Stevens at the spinet. Anything reminds Mr. Holmes of anything; no fancy is too fanciful. A poem called "Woman's College" is like a Rorschach weekend, loose to the degree of promiscuity. Mr. Holmes works on the assumption that any-

thing that can be said is worth saying. Among the available fallacies he chooses the most pathetic, until the reader is convinced that Alain Robbe-Grillet is right, after all: if relationships between Man and Nature are as easy to achieve as Mr. Holmes seems to think, they are bound to be bogus, let us away with the wretched things.

Mr. Will's sophistications take a different form, a kind of Imagism in gestures. Some of his new poems, like a sequence called "To a Friend", are the result of conceits too generously indulged. One has the impression that early versions of them might have been good meditative poems, if left alone; but that Mr. Will then went to great trouble to make them cut a dash. He speaks of "taking an occasional walk from one end of myself to another", and he constantly implies that this is a very special journey and that the scenery is remarkable. In fact, many of the new poems are album-verse, no more: like "Three for the Age", a brash thing.

*Nikolai* is a long dramatic monologue about John Nicholson, hero ("that clayfaced god") of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The narrator is an Irish-American soldier of incredible antiquity who tells the story to an American scholar sometime in the 1960s. There are suitably contemporary references to the age of overkill, and so on. Mr. Coxe has taken, in all this, a great deal of rhetorical licence. We are to think of the narrator as a capable witness, a qualified participant in the events narrated. Apparently on the excuse that the narrative is recited in the events, the soldier is made to sound like Brendan Behan on a particularly noisy evening; though on several occasions the probabilities are stretched. There are irregular explosions of Latin, philosophy, and

Tauknerian rant. *Domains* is a play in which a great War general, now president of an American college, dreams his war again. Mr. Coxe seems to take the whole thing as seriously as his simile general. There is no hint of a saving irony. If you want to destroy a play about war the easiest way is to include lines left over from the nearest propaganda film. "If they are fighting over there, can we stay out of it?", a character called Ring says. And a girl called Sally is forced to protest at one point. "I don't want a dead hero. I want a live husband."

*Domains* is a first book of poems by James Whitehead. Most of the poems are descriptive, meditative,

pointed towards the morality of the occasion. Appropriately in a book who comes from Huck Finn's colour. Most of his Negroes slight, ranged against human storms, sea, weather, the multiple things in general and death in particular. Mr. Whitehead has been schooled with Mark Twain, H. Frost, Flannery O'Connor and a companionable ghost, but he has his voice. His best poems are in the shape of anecdotes, give a notable sense of their weight of these, "His Old Friend who Comes to Talk", is a little poem, exact and just.

## In Lambeth Palace Road

by ROY FULLER

Not far, as the pigeon flies, from Waterloo, Where droppings are thick under glass awnings, To the roadway outside St. Thomas' Hospital On which a pigeon is smug as on a slide, To patients a supererogatory reminder.

How quickly a habit is established in A strange parish. Waiting for the gland To dispose of the radioactive iodine, And suchlike tidings, I visit a toupshop Conveniently under the crude shadow of County Hall, Close to where Wordsworth found the earth most fair Coffee and bun; tea and toast: *The Times* then *The Evening Standard*, punctuated by *The Freud Journal* of Lou Andreas-Salomé. Already one's actions smug of the legendary, If only to oneself, since at the moment The springs of venos are flowing after a long Spill of being lugged up. It sorely needed The slimy tangles of the cardiograph Or the sting of the syringe's proboscis to release them. They would have been satisfied to observe a waitress Making sure of her lipstick before going off duty, To mark the desolation here of the new Concrete, and rudimentary roundabout, Or just to read how in woman the genital zone Is merely leased from the anal; and that (in Lou's view) She is the antithesis of Faustian man— For why should she pursue the unattainable Since she herself is the goal?

Though immersed in the body— Its plea to Knife and Drug, ludicrous powers, To restore the health of youth—my Faustian aim Is really this love-loving, this bourgeois Collection and comparison of things. Enough that the pigeon's eye blinks as slowly as An old-fashioned camera-shutter, and that its closure Appears to be effected by the same Adumbrated arrangement of wrinkled skin. And yet uneasily I'm reminded that only By a concession wrested from the gods In their weak moments as swan lovers or lyre-fans Was art accorded the privilege of addressing A world in which one order felt ill at ease.

Bridge and river, how did you come to be Such strange companions? Were the grassy banks Separated lovers, in need of a restless creation To mingle their gravels and really enclose the silver Serpent forever slipping from their grasp? Unlucky conjunction, that allowed the horsemen To make the librarians flee, and far products Feed local manufactories of caste. But even when the arching stone is broken, As it will be, and the water divides once more, And squating birds, making imperial helmets of bow, Are truly the intelligences of the ebb-tide's litter, The arrangement of molecules will still seem An utter irrelevance—for what has earth To do with the purposelessness of divitiols?

And yet we imagined them. Found time From the massing of books and gold, and the mixing of gold For the elusive elixir of immortality, To conceive the utterly indifferent giants In their castle of great fires and freezing corridors. Is the universal order beneath the poet's Contempt, then? His sorrow for humanity, And its complex and pitiful body, too deep To be comprised in the dust and near-neighbourly constancy. One must think so, submitting to the mercy of hospital Anguished over disaster to birds, and drinking The real but small comfort of the Indian herb

## EMINENT AUSTRALIANS

*Australian Dictionary of Biography*. General Editor: Douglas Pike. Volume 1: 1788-1850. A-11. 578pp. Melbourne University Press. Cambridge University Press. £6.

Students of Australian history have until now had to depend for their only accessible biographical material on scattered articles in the *Australian Encyclopaedia* and on Percival Serle's good but short *Dictionary of Australian Biography*, written single-handed and published in two volumes in 1949. They can now look, with some pride, to the steady appearance of a series of volumes which will cover the period from 1788 to 1938, and which will offer them the sort of information (background, career and character, with, in most cases, a critical assessment and bibliography) found in the *D.N.B.*

The editor's preface to the first volume of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* explains that it is to be followed by a second for the period 1788-1850, then by four volumes for 1851-1890 and probably six for 1891-1938. The dictionary's headquarters are at the Australian National University, Canberra; but all Australian university librarians and archivists have co-operated in this vast project, and the articles (whose total, it is estimated, will be some 6,000) are drawn from a wide variety of contributors.

Among the foremost problems in editing a biographical dictionary must be the selection of names for inclusion and the allotment of space to each. Hard on the back of these problems comes that of guiding the contributors, whose ability to write with elegance and trenchancy may be (and in this volume certainly is) widely different.

Selection inevitably has to be arbitrary; even so, some instances of it here are surprising. Why, one might ask, should Captain Cook be given only a short (anonymous) article, of roughly the same length as that given to George Bruce, "sailor and adventurer", or Alexander Dalrymple the hydrographer? Such decisions may well be justified by the fact that we all know something of Cook (and can learn more from the bibliography provided) but that Bruce and Dalrymple were worth rescuing from obscurity. The decision to give Earl Grey nine columns and Earl Bathurst, an equally important Secretary of State, only one, is more difficult to understand. In principle, apart from explorers and Colonial Office men, only those who set foot in the colonies are included: an exception is made (deservedly) in the case of J. E. Gray, keeper of the zoological department of the British Museum and diligent catalogue of newly discovered Australian fauna. It would not be difficult to compile lists of those who never would be missed (in which commissariat officials and bickering military men might rank high) or of those who might have been included. But the decisions have been taken: it is more useful now to inspect what is in fact offered.

There are some 500 articles in this volume. The majority of them are good. Some are very good indeed (Arthur, Bent, Bigge, Darling, Eager, Byre, Fitzroy, Forbes, Franklin, Hindmarsh, Hunter, Gipps, Grey and a score of others) and a few of them are very bad. Some contributors have the gift of expressing themselves with grace as well as clarity. One must applaud the trenchancy of the succinct one-sided colonial public service: self-seeking mediocrity. Wisely, the editor has not imposed a uniform style upon his contributors: that might have made for intolerably dull reading. It has rather seemed quaint turns of phrase as (of Armytage) "by 1845 his quiver held seven sons and at least three daughters" or (of Bolden) "he filled his father's shoes in the short-hand world", which are surprisingly difficult to render into words at once fewer and more prosaic. But with space so precious, the editor might have used his blue pencil more to eliminate redundant phrases (as a classical scholar he [H. Duncan] made a translation of Herodotus 1, to relieve sententiousness [J. Forster] translated, edited or reviewed many accounts of voyages... thus informing the Continental peoples of Pacific and Australian affairs") and, in particular, to curb his contributors' anxiety to press the unique claims in fame of their subjects. That P. E. Cuyson "performed the first surgical operation in Victoria" is worth recording; that he was also "the victim of the first assault in Melbourne

by a demented patient on his medical attendant, being rendered unconscious by a kick in the stomach" is not. Nor are the contributors here the honesty of the author of the piece on W. N. Clark, who admits that his only claim to notice is that he fought and won the only fatal duel to take place in Western Australia.

A biographical sketch must fit tight round a subject, moulding him and no other. Occasionally contributors have inflated their subjects to the point of ludicrousness. An inglorious trader named Bishop who trafficked in sealskins, pork and firearms is fulsomely described as "an interesting representative of the current British concern for eastern commerce. His personal Odyssey was of intrinsic significance; few before him could have explored the wealth of Africa, America, Australia and Oceania." Of Thomas Arnold (son of Arnold of Rugby) it is said that "Arnold's labours in Van Diemen's Land demonstrated that a mind well trained in Oxford Greats could apply itself effectively to any human situation"—a proposition hardly borne out by the ensuing sketch, in which Arnold is shown to have made a disastrous marriage, provoked antipathy by his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church, left his post in the colony after only six years, and to have been home-tornly dogged by "economic and mental distress".

If it is to be more than merely a reference book for checking specific points, a biographical dictionary should be half "lives of the great" and half "a book of characters"; and by this test, this volume is abundantly successful. It includes not only governors, chief justices and other officials, but also aborigines, bushrangers, "wild white men", industrialists, architects, botanists, artists, missionaries and a publican. An agreeable flavour of the past is imparted by the inclusion of such characters as "Samuel Bate, sinecure", "Frederick and Charles Baucher, confidence men", "James Davis, absconder" and "Charles Hardwicke, naval lieutenant and racing enthusiast". The editor has deliberately included "less notable" figures "simply as samples of the Australian experience". The good sense of this is shown in the refreshing glimpses we have of men like the Hunter brothers, pioneer pastoralists living the "half-laborious, half-romantic" life typified by Rolf Boldrewood's station-owners, or like that self-reliant settler John Buswell, who "created wheels for a truck, dosed sick aborigines, tanned leather, read philosophy, managed everyone and wrote Latin verse".

Reasons for departure to the colonies (there are few colonial-born subjects in this early period) are always of interest. Many of course came to official appointments; others were transported (the euphemism "forced founder" has been detected only once). Some were virtually unemployed at home, were foisted on the colony by "patronage", occasionally (as in the case of Alexander Macduff Baxter) to the colony's serious cost. John Bideau and his bride eloped to Van Diemen's Land; Francis Cotton left because of "rheumatic fever, London fogs and visions of brighter prospects". John Blaxland went because he was depressed at "England's gloomy prospects" for farmers; William Burford, butcher and candle-maker, left in search of "religious freedom", arriving in the colony with one shilling and sixpence in his pocket. Archibald Bell took care to have it known that he left England "not from distress, unfortunate antecedents or any circumstance affecting his conduct or character", but simply because he hoped the colony would offer him a better chance of supporting a wife and nine children.

Others simply "arrived". Perhaps their motives cannot now be traced; but in this case (as with some of the convicts, whose date and place of conviction but not whose crime is noted) might not some scholarly equivalent of "haven't a clue"—literally denoting that perfectly common and respectable frustration liable in all historical research, the unsuccessful pursuit of possibly nonexistent material—be devised to appease the reader's curiosity?

The Dictionary is of great value in providing rounded accounts of men whose residence in Australia was but one stage in a complex career. That Eyre explored the Australian interior

is well known; the excellent article on him here goes on to discuss his later experiences as lieutenant-governor of New Zealand and particularly as governor of Jamaica, a post from which he was recalled for "unecessary rigour". It becomes the centre of intellectual warfare in England between J. S. Mill, Huxley and Herbert Spencer on one hand and Kingsley, Tennyson and Ruskin on the other. Bourke spent his retirement in leisurely fashion, editing (with Earl Fitzwilliam) the correspondence of his distant kinsman Edmund Burke. Frost the Chartist convict returned to England to publish *History of Convict Life*, but "as old age crept on abandoned politics for 'spiritualism'."

We learn some agreeably bizarre facts, such as that a cabbage weighing twenty-six pounds was presented to the Governor at Christmas 1789; that a party of Tasmanian surveyors had to subsist on "a diet of shellfish and potatoes", and that a fussy over "a cow named Blindberry" became a *cause célèbre* in Sydney. There are fascinating glimpses of the colonists' lives with them: John Glover the artist arrived with "English shubs and song birds", and William Brockman (in 1800) with "a prefabricated house". Richard Dore, deputy judge-advocate, would have been well advised to have taken out parchment, stationery and "practical law books", for he found none on his arrival in the colony. John Bideau successfully acclimatised falow deer and pheasants. Sir Henry Hayes surrounded his house with "a moat of turf which he had imported from Ireland" to keep the snakes at bay (it appears to have worked); but poor Samuel Anderson's "treasured thistles from the Burns monument at Dumfries were to prove noxious". Curious cargoes landed in England: George Harper presented two live emus to his patron Sir Walter Scott, who accepted them in the belief that they were "some sort of blue and green parrot" but was dismayed to discover that they were "little better than a kind of cassowary or ostrich".

The reader gratefully encounters less familiar pioneers: Hector the Persian stallion (now recognized as the foundation of Australian bloodstock); Margeaux, "dam of many fine horses"; Speedy the race horse who had many successes on the newly-established Sydney turf 1819-21; Newton, the first Spanish rap to reach Hobart, bought for eighty guineas in 1829; and Hadji Baba the Arab horse. All these names (and that of the cow named Blindberry) deserve to be included in the complete index which is eventually to be published.

Professor Pike has said (elsewhere) that he hopes the Dictionary "will inform and instruct the lonely shepherd in his hut as well as the don in his study". It offers both instruction and entertainment to a wide variety of readers, not only in huts and studies but also in public libraries and schools. This volume is excellently produced, and by no means of discouraging dimensions. Its successors will be awaited with great interest.

This time he fulfils a long-cherished dream of a spell with the Flying Disc service. The pattern is depressingly akin to others in the seemingly endless saga—a collection of clichés with local colour, technical accounts

## EARLY MELBOURNE

*Georgiana's Journal*. Edited by Hugh McCrae. 262pp. Angus and Robertson. £3 10s.

Georgiana McCrae was the Scottish wife of a Scottish lawyer who settled in Melbourne at the beginning of the 1840s. She had been brought up in London and was a woman of some culture who had taken drawing lessons from the celebrated John Varley. In Australia, she kept a diary, fairly consistently for the first five years, and sporadically thereafter; and this, edited by her grandson, the poet Hugh McCrae, was originally published in Australia in 1934. The present volume, the second edition, is the first to appear in this country.

To those who know Melbourne and are interested in the early days of the settlement there, this is obviously a book of some significance, though purely as a diary it cannot be said to rank high. Much of it is small beer of the flattest description: "Baby Bunbury is very ill... from teething"; "unpacked George's trousers... found them already two inches too short"; "kangaroo soup... to our taste, ox-tail is a superior article". All very fascinating, no doubt, to the descendants, as is attested by Mr. McCrae's massive and painstaking annotations, to say nothing of the

illustrations, however, are a different matter. Georgiana profited from her lessons with Varley (to whom, oddly enough, she was introduced by the daughter of the revolutionary firebrand, Thomas Holcroft). Her many sketches and portraits here excellently reproduced are memorable. So also, though for a different reason, are the potent early photographs of the aristocratic lightbulbs of the Melbourne club, complete with their chimney-pot hats and their liveried maids.

## DOCTOR AT LARGE

GEORGE SAVA: *A Surgeon in Australia*. 256pp. Faber and Faber. 25s.

It is a middle-class characteristic everywhere, but particularly in Britain, to hold doctors in low esteem. "I must see my quack", the affluent and semi-affluent say, when something goes wrong and they must perforce visit their doctor. Practitioners of "fringe medicine", on the other hand, become "that wonderful little bone man, or the black box wizard, or the man who cures everything with herbs". What makes the under-valuation of doctors so puzzling is the rate at which books about them continue to be written and (apparently) read, since to cap this attitude of patronizing condescension scarcely more than two or three of these books are written with grace or credibility. George Sava, an aviduous miner of this presumably profitable seam, is a plastic surgeon; though a cursory reading of his works leaves the impression that there is no branch of medicine in which he is not proficient ("I happen to be a Harley Street specialist with a modest knowledge of surgery", he informs an unimpressed aborigine)—nor a place in the world (*A Surgeon in Rome*, *A Surgeon in California*, *A Surgeon in New Zealand*, *A Surgeon in Cyprus*, *A Surgeon under Capricorn*, and lots more) where he has not practised the healing art. He must be an infrequent attendant at his Harley Street rooms.

This time he fulfils a long-cherished dream of a spell with the Flying Disc service. The pattern is depressingly akin to others in the seemingly endless saga—a collection of clichés with local colour, technical accounts

of medical procedures, and hackle-raising writing. "You're a surgeon", I reminded myself sternly, "all right, here you're fighting against fantastic odds, but it's your job to fight, not to stop and think about life's cruelty." Mr. Sava's world and the equally ridiculous Dr. Kildare world of men in white coats dallying with nubile nurses in hospital corridors and operating-theatres in the intervals between high drama with their patients are a far cry from the freeze on doctors' pay, long hours, dingy overcrowded waiting-rooms, and early twentieth-century hospitals. This world is unchronicled. Somerset Maugham in *List of Lambeth*, Francis Brett Young, and A. J. Cronin in *The Citadel* glanced briefly at it in an earlier stage of its existence; Sinclair Lewis wrote sympathetically, unenthusiastically, and with insight of life and work in mammoth prestigious research institutes. But real live human beings whose work happens to be doctoring seldom appear in great writing. Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago and Chekhov's doctors are credible human beings, precisely because the technical details of their work are incidental. In the novels, novelettes, and television plays of today the technical details are foreground figures. No one, for instance, has written imaginatively about the impact of thousands of Pakistani and African doctors and nurses who prop up the rickety structure of hospitals in the National Health Service. Here, surely, there is scope even for Mr. Sava. *A Pakistani Surgeon in Bradford?*

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## A NEW APPROACH TO CRIME?

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*[The inclusion of a book in this list does not preclude its subsequent review]*

The title of the book by John Radcliffe, reviewed on this page last week is *Peace Aboard*.

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